

ANDERSON RANCH DAIRY
(Anderson Marsh State Historic Park)
Highway 53
Lower Lake
Lake County
California

HALS CA-64
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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Anderson Ranch Dairy (Anderson Marsh State Historic Park)

HALS NO. CA-64

Location: Anderson Ranch Dairy, Highway 53, Lower Lake, CA, 95457, (707) 994-0688.
Lat: 38.921572 Long: -122.613603 (Ranch House, Google Earth, Simple Cylindrical Projection, WGS84).

Significance: The property is important both as an archaeological site and as one of the last intact nineteenth century ranches in Lake County, California. The Park contains protected artifacts that span the entire history of human habitation in this area, and is also a designated nature preserve.

Description: One approaches the cluster of buildings and structures that form the Anderson ranch complex, from the south. The west edge is defined by two barns separated by a corral. To the east is another barn, and the north side of the grouping is formed by the ranch house. A white picket fence defines front, side and backyard areas around the house, and rail fences enclose the barns and larger yard. Feed bins, hay bins and various animal stalls add to the complex. One other large barn is at the northwest corner outside the primary complex, and there are the remains of another irregularly-shaped corral also to the northwest. These structures and barns were built in the 1800s from hand hewn redwood and provided shelter for the family and animals in an open, windy, hot location.

The barns, ranch house and fences are laid out around a central open space and the grouping forms a cohesive compound. The central open space is approximately 175 feet east to west and 225 feet north to south.

Throughout the building cluster broad spreading mature oaks and willow shade the area. This part of California experiences hot summer temperatures so shade is essential.

Except for a wooden porch, that surrounds all sides of the house, surfaces are compacted earth without clearly defined paths. There is one small area paved with coarsely scored concrete – presumably to prevent slipping my man or animals – outside one of the barns.

Distant views across the fields toward the marsh and beyond to surrounding hills are available from most places on the complex, except to the east where a wooden wall has been added to screen Highway 53 from view.

The park is 1065 acres and includes freshwater marsh wetlands, native grasslands, California oak woodland and riparian woodland. Today's marsh is approximately eight percent of what was once a vast marsh that fed Clear Lake – the largest lake

wholly within the borders of California.

History: The site was first occupied by the southeastern Pomo Native Americans – one of the largest groups of indigenous peoples in California. The Pomo are known as some of the best basket-makers in the country, so the marsh tule provided ample supplies of raw material for basket making. The state park includes archaeological sites from these Pomo people, some are among the oldest found in California, dating at over 10,000 years old.

Settlement first occurred in this part of California in the mid 1850s. Two Grigsby brothers from Tennessee first occupied this site and built the central two-story portion of the ranch house and two barns. At that time the site was part of Napa County and known as Hot Springs Township. Grigsby raised livestock and crops.

In 1870 John Melchesadick “Mels” Grigsby sold the property to the Clear Lake Waterworks Company, in part as a result of a disagreement about how the land was being managed. In 1866 a portion of Grigsby’s land was flooded when the water company dammed Cache Creek and overflow from Clear Lake flooded the Grigsby property. This conflict over water continued between Lake and Yolo Counties for over one hundred years – one of many water related conflicts that have defined California. After Grigsby left, the water company planted this area in vineyards and orchards.

In 1885 Scottish immigrant, John Still Anderson purchased a portion of the property – 1300 acres and started a dairy. He also grew hay and grain for the cattle. Anderson expanded the ranch house for his wife and family of six children by adding the two-story west wing. The second and third generations of Andersons ran a successful cattle ranching operation and remained on the property until the 1960s. The California State Parks system acquired the land in 1982 and dedicated it as a park in 1983.

Sources: Site visit on 25 April 2011.

California State Parks website at: <http://www.parks.ca.gov>

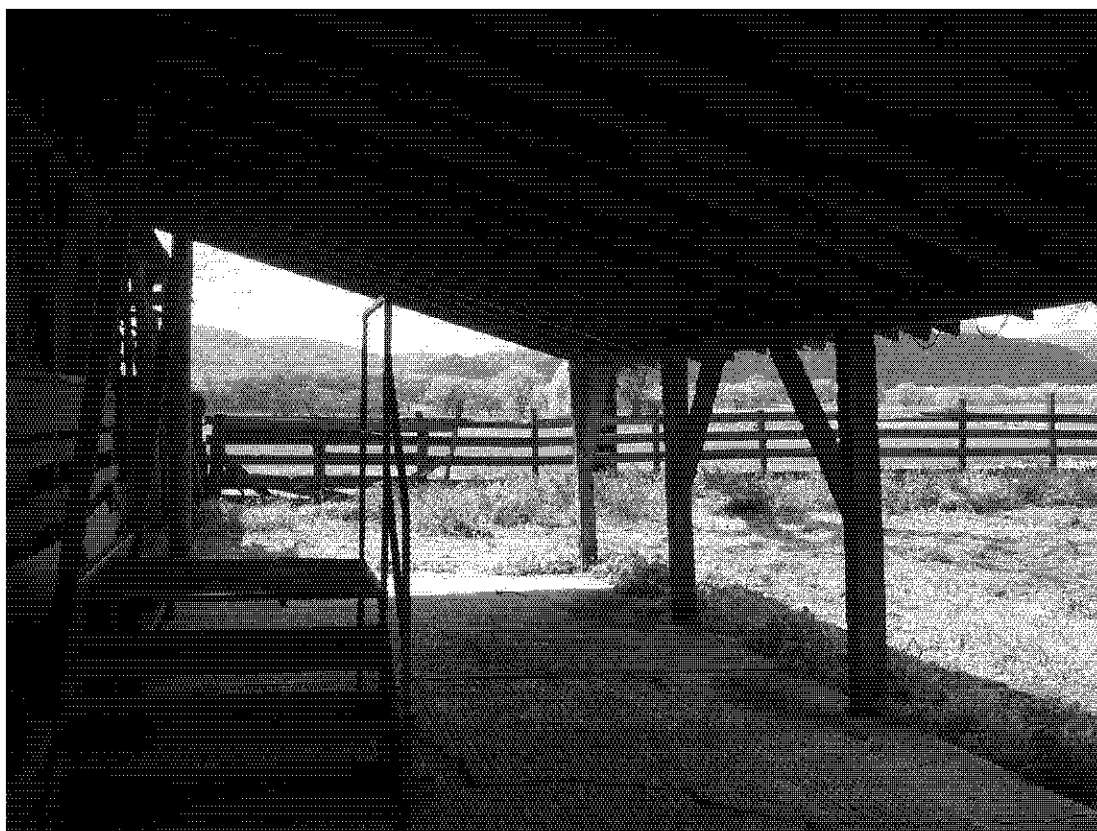
Wikipedia site: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anderson_Marsh_State_Historic_Park

Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association, P.O. Box 672, Lower Lake, CA 95457,
<http://www.andersonmarsh.org>

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The original ranch house was built by the Grigsby family and enlarged, with the addition of the two-story west wing, by the Anderson family. A white picket fence surrounds the house and yards. (Chris Pattillo, April 25, 2011).



Lean-to structure on the north side of one barn provides a shaded outdoor work space with a roughly finished concrete surface. (Chris Pattillo, April 25, 2011).



Corral in the northwest corner is defined by timber fence. The fields, marsh and surrounding hills in the background. (Chris Pattillo, April 25, 2011).



Back porch looking as it did when the Anderson family lived here including an old ringer washer and children's red wagon. (Chris Pattillo, April 25, 2011).



Sketch of Anderson Ranch made from an aerial. A. Ranch House, B. Barns, C. Corrals, D. Picket Fencing, E. Rail Fencing, G. Wood Wall that Screens Highway 53, H. Highway 53, I. Visitor Parking, J. Entry Road, K. Cultivated Field, and L. Windmill. (Chris Pattillo, April 2011).